

Early Care & Education at Home

Herbs

Did You Know

- Herbs are often defined as the leaves and flowers of plants that are used for flavor, fragrance, or medicine.
- The part of the plant used defines it as an herb or a spice. For example, when using the green leaves of the plant *Coriandrum sativum*, it is the herb cilantro, and when using the seeds, it is the spice coriander.
- Although herbs are not a large part of Montana's agricultural landscape, the number of Montana farms producing herbs has increased substantially over the last 10 years.
- Wild mint and beebalm (wild bergamot) are herbs native to Montana. Traditionally, mint tea was so commonly drunk amongst Apsaalooke (Crow) people, that one of the Apsaalooke words for "mint" is the same as the word for "tea." Mint tea was also brewed by Chipewa-Cree people to treat colds, headaches, coughs, and fevers. Sélish (Salish), Ktunaxa (Kootenai), and Qaeisp'e (Pend d'Oreilles) tribes used beebalm for medicinal purposes, including to cure colds and treat mouth and throat infections.



Oregano



Chives



Basil



Cilantro



Sage

Buying Tips

Select herbs that are free of disease, discoloration, or damage. Purchase only enough herbs for immediate use, unless planning to dry or freeze them. Gently wash and dry herbs after harvest or purchase. Trim the bases of the stems, place them in a jar with an inch of water, cover loosely with a plastic bag, then transfer to the refrigerator. Freeze or dry herbs that will not be used within a week after purchase.

Book Nook

A Kid's Herb Book, by Lesley Tierra

Rooftop Garden, by Danna Smith

The Spice Alphabet Book, by Jerry Pallotta



Herb	Bay Leaf	Parsley	Chives	Dill	Lavender	Sage	Tarragon
Taste	Bitter, minty, pungent	Bright, peppery	Mild onion flavor	Pungent, tangy	Floral, minty	Minty, slightly bitter, citrus	Licorice, lemon flavor
Plant Family (common name)	Lauraceae (laurel family)	Apiaceae (carrot family)	Amaryllidaceae (amaryllis family)	Apiaceae (carrot family)	Lamiaceae (mint family)	Lamiaceae (mint family)	Asteraceae (daisy family)
Fun Facts	In ancient Greece, famous athletes and artists were crowned with wreaths of bay leaves.	There are two main types of parsley: curly and flat leaf (Italian).	Wild chives are native to Montana and can be found growing wildly in the western region of the state.	Both the leaves and seeds of dill plants are used, and their flavors differ substantially.	In 77 A.D. Romans documented the use of lavender to repel insects and treat insect bites.	Sage is of the genus <i>Salvia</i> . <i>Salvia</i> is derived from <i>salvus</i> , which means healthy in Latin.	Tarragon's root system resembles coiled snakes, making medieval healers falsely believe it was a cure for snakebites.
Native Region	Mediterranean	Southern Europe	Europe, Northern Asia, North America	Mediterranean, Western Asia	Mediterranean	Mediterranean	Central Asia, Siberia

Gardening

Herbs are a perfect addition to any Montana garden, as they can be grown in beds, containers, and even indoors. Most thrive with at least 6 hours of direct sunlight and well-drained soil, but their specific requirements will differ. Many hardy herbs can be planted several weeks before the last frost, while tender herbs should be planted outdoors only once the danger of frost has passed. In Montana, outdoor herbs are harvested between June and September. Take note of whether herbs are perennials or annuals. A perennial is a plant that lives more than two years, whereas an annual plant only lives one year. The local climate can impact whether a plant is a perennial or annual. For example, rosemary does not do well outdoors in cold winters, like in Montana. However, it thrives in warmer growing zones year-round and can become 4-6 feet tall.



Dill



Mint

Dig Deeper

For sources and photo credits along with more recipes, lessons, quick activities, resources, and guides, visit: mtharvestofthemoth.org.

Recipe










Melon Mint Salad

Source: John C. Stalker Institute (johnstalkerinstitute.org)

Servings

6

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 tsp   Honey
- 1 1/2 tsp   Lemon juice
- 1 lb  Watermelon, cubed
- 1 lb  Honeydew, cubed
- 1 lb  Cantaloupe, cubed
- 2 Tbsp   Fresh mint leaves, chiffonade or minced

Preparation

1. In a small bowl, combine honey and lemon juice. Stir well and set aside.
2. Wash the outside of each melon.
3. Cut away melon rinds and cut melon into 1 inch cubes.
4. In a large bowl, add melon cubes and combine. Pour honey and lemon mixture over melon and mix lightly to combine.
5. Sprinkle mint over melon mixture and mix lightly to combine.
6. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use or serve immediately.

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The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana communities. This program is a collaboration between Montana Farm to School, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, FoodCorps Montana, Montana Organic Association, and Montana Department of Agriculture. More information and resources are available at: mtharvestofthemoth.org.

Funds were provided in part by USDA Team Nutrition Training grants, USDA funds, USDA Farm to School grants, Montana Healthcare Foundation, Northern Pulse Growers Association, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Montana School Nutrition Association, Montana Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant, Montana Grains Foundation, Dairy MAX, Montana Pulse Crop Committee, Montana Wheat and Barley Committee. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. The Montana State University Extension Service is an ADA/EO/AA/Veteran's Preference Employer and Provider of Educational Outreach.